THOMAS MORE

Internship - Sudal

Self-Reflection

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1. Introduction

This document presents a two-part reflection on my thirteen-week internship at Soudal NV in Turnhout, Belgium. During the placement I evaluated, piloted, and helped plan the rollout of a modern privilege management solution designed to replace permanent local administrator rights on the company's endpoints with controlled, temporary, and fully auditable just-in-time elevation. The first part reflects the project itself: what was delivered, where it stands today, and the work that remains. The second part is a personal reflection on the skills I developed, the challenges I worked through, and the lessons I am taking with me into my career. Together, these two parts aim to give a complete picture of both the value delivered to Soudal and the professional growth I achieved along the way.

2. Reflection on the Project

2.1 What Was Accomplished and Why It Matters

The central goal of the internship was to address a concrete security and compliance gap in Soudal's endpoint environment. Several user groups, including Engineering, Service Desk, and selected power users, still held permanent local administrator rights on their devices. This was convenient for daily work, but it expanded the attack surface, left administrative actions without a complete audit trail, and weakened Soudal's compliance posture under ISO 27001 and the General Data Protection Regulation.

To address this, I ran a structured evaluation of two candidate privilege elevation tools: Admin By Request, a third-party cloud-based platform, and Microsoft Endpoint Privilege Management, a native add-on to Microsoft Intune. I built a controlled laboratory environment and tested Admin By Request in depth, validating its core elevation features and deploying it through Microsoft Intune as a line-of-business application. Alongside the hands-on testing, I researched both tools, developed a weighted feature comparison, and used it to produce an evidence-based recommendation rather than one based on vendor material alone.

On top of the evaluation, I designed a targeted, three-phase deployment strategy covering research and evaluation, a pilot rollout, and a full migration, with specific configurations and approval workflows for each user group and a lightweight training approach to support adoption. I also presented my findings on several occasions: to my workplace mentors at Soudal, to management in a version of the presentation focused on the business case and the security justification, and at the school follow-up moments.

This work matters because it moves Soudal from a permanent, hard-to-audit administrator model toward a temporary, policy-driven one. The result is a measurable reduction in attack surface, a complete audit trail for elevated actions, closer alignment with Microsoft's cloud-native security guidance, and a stronger compliance position, all of which support the company's wider digitalization and security goals.

2.2 Present State of the Project

By the end of the placement, Admin By Request had been fully validated in the laboratory and deployed and tested through Microsoft Intune, including the resolution of the role-based access control issues encountered during setup. The feature comparison between the two tools was completed, and a documented recommendation together with the phased deployment strategy was handed over to the ICT team. The project therefore reached the point where Soudal can act on a clear, evidence-based proposal for modernizing privilege management on its endpoints.

2.3 Work That Remains

Although the evaluation and recommendation are complete, several items remain for Soudal to take forward:

- Extending the work from the pilot into a broader production rollout across the remaining in-scope devices, and in later cycles to additional user groups.
- Establishing a long-term monitoring and reporting cadence so the ICT team can track elevation activity and compliance status without manual effort.
- Tuning the elevation rules and approval workflows based on real operational feedback once the solution is in wider use.

3. Personal Reflection

3.1 Skills and Competencies

Technically, this internship took me well beyond my academic baseline. I had covered Microsoft cloud and security concepts at school, but configuring and operating them in a real enterprise environment was a different level entirely. I gained practical depth in privileged access management and the just-in-time elevation model, in deploying and managing applications and policies through Microsoft Intune, and in how Microsoft Entra ID, Conditional Access, device compliance, and role-based access control fit together to enforce endpoint security. Working hands-on with Admin By Request and researching Microsoft Endpoint Privilege Management also taught me to read vendor documentation critically and to separate marketing claims from real behavior.

Just as important were the professional skills. Running a structured tool evaluation taught me to define clear, weighted criteria, to design tests I could reproduce, and to base a recommendation on evidence rather than opinion. I learned to document my work so that others can follow it, and to

present the same project in two very different registers: a technical version for the ICT team and a business-focused version for management. The support of my workplace mentors at Soudal was valuable throughout, and the regular check-ins gave me a structured way to discuss progress, work through technical decisions, and stay aligned with the team.

3.2 Key Challenge and Solution

The most significant challenge was the technical complexity of integrating a privilege elevation tool cleanly into Soudal's existing cloud-managed environment. Deploying Admin By Request through Intune surfaced role-based access control and permission issues that were not obvious at first and that took careful work to diagnose. A second challenge was a dependency outside my own control: part of the evaluation relied on access and licensing being in place, which at times risked stalling progress.

My approach was a combination of methodical troubleshooting, careful reading of Microsoft and vendor documentation, and asking my mentors for help when an issue sat outside my experience. To keep the project moving while a dependency was unresolved, I worked on the parts I could progress in parallel, so that no time was lost waiting. This mix of self-directed research and knowing when to ask for help proved to be the most effective strategy, and it is a habit I intend to carry forward.

3.3 Growth and Outlook

This internship gave me a realistic picture of what professional IT work involves, from analyzing a problem and evaluating options to deploying a solution and documenting it for the people who will maintain it. I am leaving with a level of professional confidence I did not have at the start, and with a clearer sense of the kind of work I enjoy problems where a technical decision has a direct impact on how an organization operates and on how secure it is. I feel ready to enter the industry as a junior IT professional and to keep building on the foundation this placement has given me.

3.4 Advice to My Past Self

If I were to start the internship again, the main thing I would do differently is to arrange access and dependencies as early as possible. The placement showed me how much an external dependency can affect a tight thirteen-week timeline and raising it sooner would have given more room to absorb any delay. I would also document my test results continuously as I went, rather than consolidating them later, and I would seek input from the people who use elevation in their daily work earlier in the process, so that the deployment design reflected their reality from the start. Planning, communication, and provisioning are not steps that come after the technical work; they run alongside it.

3.5 Working with the Team

Working inside an established ICT team was a valuable part of the experience. My mentors and colleagues were knowledgeable and approachable, and a lot of what I learned came simply from

being present in everyday conversations and asking questions. If I were to do it again, I would push myself to engage even more with the wider team beyond strictly work-related moments, because those informal exchanges are where much practical knowledge and good working relationships are built. It is a small effort that is almost always appreciated, and it pays off well beyond the task at hand.

4. Conclusion

This internship at Soudal delivered a clear outcome: a validated, evidence-based recommendation for modernizing privilege management, supported by hands-on testing, a feature comparison, and a phased deployment strategy that the company can act on. The work moves Soudal away from permanent local administrator rights and towards a temporary, auditable, policy-driven model that reduces risk and strengthens compliance.

On a personal level, placement gave me hands-on experience across a full security project, from analysis and evaluation to deployment, documentation, and stakeholder communication. The technical depth I gained in Microsoft Intune, identity and access management, and privileged access management, combined with the professional skills I developed in structured evaluation, documentation, and presenting to different audiences, form a foundation I am confident I can build on throughout my career.

Most of all, the experience clarified the kind of professional I want to be: one who understands both the technical solution and the business problem it is solving, and who can communicate clearly